



## *Group B Streptococcus and Pregnancy*

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GBS (Group B Streptococcus) is a bacteria found in about 30-40% of women. It commonly resides in the vagina or rectum and is not a sexually-transmitted infection. The significance of the bacteria is that if a newborn is exposed during the birth process, the infant stands a 1-2% chance of acquiring an infection that occasionally causes death.

### **How Do I Find Out If I Have GBS?**

A woman's GBS status is usually determined by a vaginal or rectal culture. This is ideally done between 35-37 weeks of pregnancy with a sterile swab placed in the vaginal area and then passed by the rectum. The culture usually takes a week to develop.

### **What Does a Positive GBS Test Mean?**

If you have GBS, you are most likely considered colonized or a carrier. This means that, although you are infected, you have no real symptoms or problems for you. Also, a GBS infection does not indicate poor hygiene or care.

### **What Is the Treatment?**

Since the bacteria is transmitted to infants during delivery, women who carry GBS are treated with an antibiotic during labor. The antibiotic decreases the bacterial counts and the risk of transmission.

The reason the patient is not treated at the time of diagnosis is that once the antibiotic is administered, it quickly leaves the patients' system. If the medication is not continually given, the GBS will return. Thus, labor is the most useful time to administer the antibiotics.

We hope this information will help to answer your questions about GBS. If you have other questions regarding GBS, please contact your doctor or nurse.